

REMARKS

The present Amendment is in response to the Examiner's Office Action mailed April 5, 2006. Claims 1-8, 14-20, and 58-86 are cancelled and claims 9, 10, 12, 21, 22, and 24 are amended. Claims 9-13 and 21-57 are now pending in view of the above amendments.

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested in view of the above amendments to the claims and the following remarks. For the Examiner's convenience and reference, Applicant's remarks are presented in the order in which the corresponding issues were raised in the Office Action.

Please note that the following remarks are not intended to be an exhaustive enumeration of the distinctions between any cited references and the claimed invention. Rather, the distinctions identified and discussed below are presented solely by way of example to illustrate some of the differences between the claimed invention and the cited references. In addition, Applicants request that the Examiner carefully review any references discussed below to ensure that Applicants understanding and discussion of the references, if any, is consistent with the Examiner's understanding.

I. Allowed Subject Matter

The Examiner's allowance of claims 26-57 is appreciated. Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the careful review and allowance of those claims.

The Applicant's submit the following comments concerning the Examiner's statements of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter in the Office Action. Applicant agrees with the Examiner that the claimed invention of claims 26-57 is patentable over the prior art, but respectfully disagrees with the Examiners statement of reasons for allowance as set forth in Office Action. Applicant submits that it is the claim as a whole, rather than any particular limitation, that makes each of the claims allowable. No single limitation should be construed as the reason for allowance of a claim because it is each of the elements of the claim that makes it allowable. Therefore, Applicant's do not concede that the reasons for allowable subject matter given by the Examiner are the only reasons that make, or would make, the claims allowable and do not make any admission or concession concerning the Examiner's statement in the Office Action.

The Examiner has indicated that claims 9-13 and 21-25 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In response, Applicants have rewritten claims 9, 10, 12, 21, 22, and 24 in an independent format so as to include all of the limitations of the base claim. In particular, the scope of claims 9, 10, 12, 21, 22, and 24 have not been narrowed in any way so as to overcome any prior art, but have merely been rewritten in an independent format. As acknowledged by the Examiner, those claims are patentably distinct from the prior art, and are now in condition for allowance. Moreover, for at least the same reason, claims now depending from one of claims 10, 12, 22, and 24 – namely, claims 11, 13, 23, and 25 – are also in a condition for allowance at least for the same reasons as the claims from which they depend.

In summary, claims 9-13 and 21-25 are now pending in view of the above amendments, and all are patentably distinct from the prior art. Allowance of each of these claims is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe the claims as amended are in allowable form. In the event that the Examiner finds remaining impediment to a prompt allowance of this application that may be clarified through a telephone interview, or which may be overcome by an Examiner's Amendment, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney.

Dated this 1 day of August, 2006.

Respectfully submitted,
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